THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (d) Government have, from time to time, handed over to Pakistan list of fugitives from Indian law, known to be residing in Pakistan with the request that they be apprehended and handed over to India. A consolidated list, along with a similar request, was again handed over to Pakistan during the Home Secretary level talks on the subject of "Terrorism and Drug Trafficking" held in Islamabad on August 10-11, 2004 as part of the Composite Dialogue. Besides, during the meeting of the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries on September 4, 2004 in New Delhi, preparatory to the meeting of the Foreign Ministers on September 5-6, 2004, India's proposal for an extradition treaty was reiterated.

Pakistan has, so far, not responded positively to these requests and to the proposal for an extradition treaty.

Indo-us Joint Working Group on Terrorism

1505. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether a joint Indo-US working group on counter-terrorism has been operational in India since January 2000, and there were certain unfortunate experiences with US intelligence agencies;

(b) if so, whether this working group is still operational and what positive benefits/useful inputs we have had, which strengthened our national security set-up; and

(c) whether Government propose such joint working groups with other countries also in combating menace of terrorism?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. An India-US Joint Working Group (JWG) on Counter-Terrorism was set up in January 2000 and has, since, met six times. Ambassador Cofer Black, US State Department's Senior Coordinator for Counter-Terrorism last visted India on March 1-2, 2004 when he held detailed discussions with his counterpart in the Ministry of External Affairs and other officials. The JWG provide a framework for strengthening cooperation to combat terrorism including through exchanges of information and assessments on terrorism, training and curbing of drug trafficking.

(c) Government has agreements with several other countries for strengthening cooperation to combat terrorism.

Duties and Responsibilities of Indian Embassies

1506. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the duties and responsibilities of the Indian Embassies and High Commissions located in different Countries with annual expenditure on each;

(b) whether it is a fact that numerous complaints have been received regarding unhelpful attitude of the Indian Embassy/Mission staff to the plight of the Indians working abroad, particularly in the Gulf Countries; and

(c) if so, what measures are taken to ensure that the Staff manning the Indian Embassies/Missions abroad respond positively and promptly to the needs of NRIs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Indian Embassies and High Commissions in different countries embody India's diplomatic representation in foreign countries. They promote and safeguard India's political, strategic, economic and cultural interest, as also its global interests; serve the main imperatives of our foreign policy; promote our national interest at different regional and multilateral fora; address the needs of the Overseas Indians abroad; and promote India's image abroad as a self-confident nation committed to the principles of democracy,secularism and friendship with all nations.

The Indian Missions regularly monitor and assess the emerging situation in the host country and countries of concurrent accreditation, taking into account the political, economic and the socio-cultural factors, and brief the Government of India on ways to promote and protect our national interests. They keep in regular contact with the host Government at different levels to project and seek support for government of India's positions on various international issues of vital importance to our national interests.

Our Missions and Posts abroad provide assistance to Indian nationals and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) on consular matters. The Head of